



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE BIBLICAL WORLD

VOLUME XLVII

JANUARY 1916

NUMBER 1

THE GLORY OF THE MINISTRY

Are ministers ashamed of the ministry? Sometimes it would seem as though they were. We are often told that a minister's influence depends on himself as a "manly man," that the authority of his calling is past, that a good mixer is more needed than a prophet.

There is some truth in these statements, but more error. The ministry as a calling is still respected. When an ordinary man mounts the pulpit, his position is out of the ordinary. A little man in the pulpit often has great influence. Men who have no particular respect for his mental ability, his financial standing, his good looks, or his knowledge of literature, take him seriously because he is a minister. Go into any town or any city, and you will find that men often respect the ministry more than they respect the ministers.

Of course there are men in the ministry who are little more than social chaplains co-operatively sustained. They are bits of social rococo plastered on a community by a salary. But even these poor souls get significance because they are in the ministry. Without it they might have been physical instead of spiritual valets, manicuring men's finger nails instead of their morals.

The more a minister magnifies his calling the more effect he will have in a community. Seriousness of purpose, a contagious faith in God, a saving sense of humor, a sensible wife, and a reckless devotion to duty are vastly more important than an ability to swap stories or make flippant after-dinner speeches.



It would be a mistake to turn a country minister into an agricultural expert. A minister's spiritual success will only incidentally be dependent on his knowledge of how to raise hogs. Loyalty to the ideals of the vocation of which he is the representative, coupled with

whatever common-sense he may have inherited or acquired, must be central in the country minister's life as truly as in the city minister's. If he is to head a community center, he must show men that this center is based on religion and not on better crops.



True, the ministry has its irritations. So have other callings. But a minister has one luxury which his congregation does not dare to afford: sacrifice in the service of others. Many a shopkeeper cannot afford to support a reform. He fears he would lose the trade of the people whom he would reform. The lawyer seldom dares to afford the luxury of giving up a client whose cause he thinks is unjust. Even the doctor tempers his fees to the unshorn patient. But the minister, just because he is a minister, has more influence in town affairs than the shopkeeper, a larger share in shaping public opinion than the lawyer, and more opportunities to do good than the doctor. But he does not make the community or the sinner or the unfortunate pay for such service. Because he is in the ministry, he can afford the luxury of self-sacrifice. Verily, he gets his reward.



There is nothing more pathetic than to see a minister feel complimented when someone tells him he does not seem like a minister. Does a doctor like to be thought un-doctor-like? Or a lawyer un-lawyer-like? Or a plumber un-plumber-like? If such a minister had been among the disciples would he have preferred to have Jesus appear Pilate-like, or Pharisee-like, or anything except Teacher-like, and ultimately, to those who loved him, Christ-like?



The ministry of today is no place for petty little souls who want to utter beautiful thoughts picked up from dictionaries of quotations. But it is a commanding place for earnest souls who want to build their lives into their nation and their world. Such men you will never hear speak slightly of the vocation which furnishes them opportunity and influence they could never have reached single-handed. For these true ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ know that the ministry is both opportunity and power.